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FORECAST OF INCREASED GA ACTIVITY MAY SET STAGE FOR NEW CONSTRAINTS

Federal Aviation Administration may be setting the stage for new constraints on general aviation or higher taxes on that segment of the industry with its forecast last week that general aviation will claim an increasing share of FAA services over the next 10 years. Harvey Safeer, director of aviation policy and plans for FAA, addressing the agency's annual forecast conference, projected that GA operations will account for 75 percent of activity at tower controlled airports by 1995 and for nearly one-third of the workload at FAA en route control centers. While he did not address the issue of higher taxes or directly focus on demand constraints, general aviation interests are concerned by the potential ramifications of Safeer's forecast.

Safeer said general aviation accounted for 66 percent of total tower operations in 1983 and predicted GA's share will grow to 75 percent by 1995. During the same period air carrier operations will decrease and commuter/air taxi operations will remain constant *(see charts on the back of Pages 66 and 67).* Safeer warned that "this shift has its implication for the operation of the air traffic control system. The more heterogeneous the mix of traffic, the greater the problems associated with local flow control management."

In regard to IFR aircraft handled at ATC centers, Safeer predicted similar increases with total workload forecast to grow at an annual rate of 3.1 percent through 1995. He said GA operations would grow 4.7 percent annually and commuter operations would increase 6.4 percent, while air carrier traffic is expected to increase 1.9 percent annually. This will result in commuter/air taxi and general aviation comprising half of center workload by 1995, he said.

NBAA's Winant Concerned About Implications of Forecast

NBAA President John Winant told *BA* he is "appalled at the implication inherent in some of the predictions, which I think are subject to gross error." Noting the rapid changes that have occurred in the aviation industry, particularly since deregulation, Winant said "nobody's prediction is worth more than two years," adding that a 10-year forecast "should not be taken seriously. If people are trying to point us into short-term policy decisions (on the basis of such forecasts) they're misleading us badly."

Winant noted during his luncheon address to the forecast conference the ongoing National Aviation System Plan (NASP) and National Airspace Review (NAR) programs being conducted by FAA. Winant said the NASP can "provide the hardware and computerized capability for meeting the needs of aviation users right into the 21st century" and said the NAR "will act to insure that the hardware and automation provided by the NASP are put to the most effective use." While supporting those programs, Winant warned that "we must insure they do not result in conditions of permanent constraint on use of our air space. It would be extremely comfortable from a governmental viewpoint to live with a limited, easily dampened, readily smoothed level of demand. We must not let that happen and must elect the more difficult challenge of building the system up so that it meets unconstrained demand."

There have been a number of government reports issued during the past 10 years charging that general aviation is not paying a fair share of costs it imposes on the ATC system *(BA, Jan. 23/25).* It appears likely that FAA's latest forecast of substantial increases in GA activity will provide increased support for either increasing the level of taxes paid by general aviation or imposing constraints on use of the ATC system.

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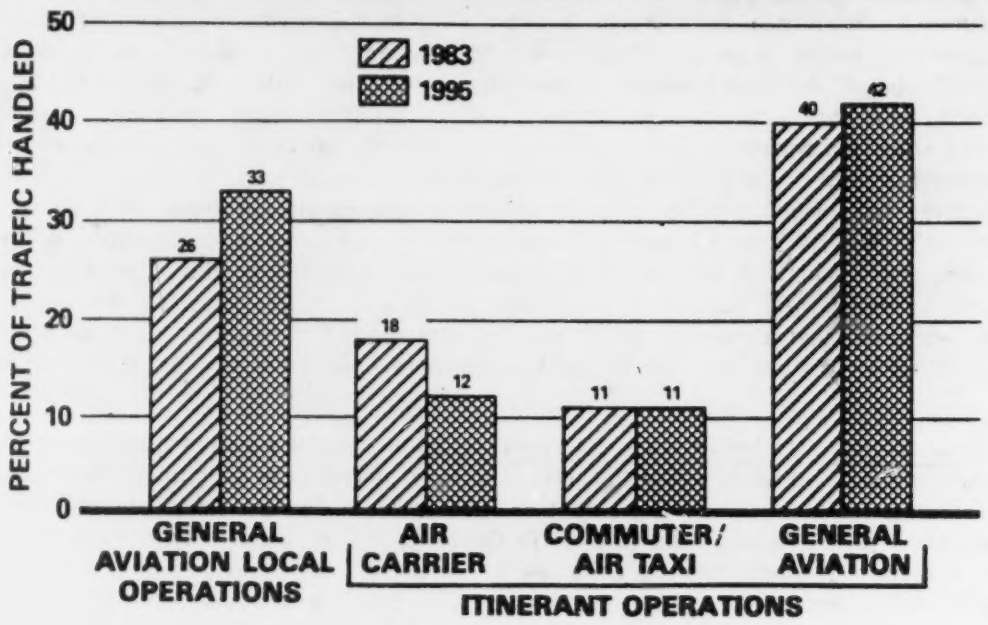
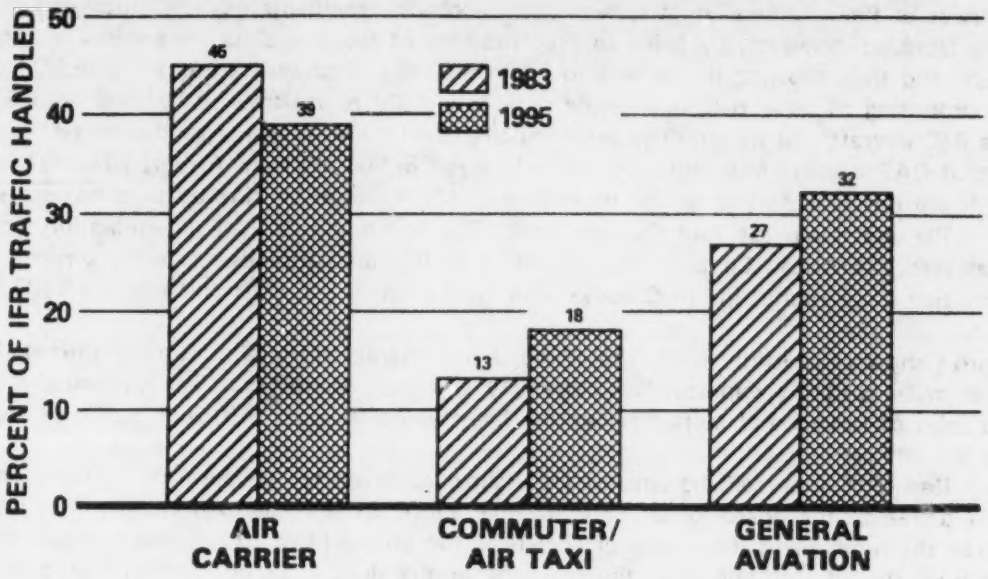
DISTRIBUTION OF OPERATIONS AT AIRPORTS WITH FAA TRAFFIC CONTROL SERVICE



THE NET EFFECT OF THE DIFFERENTIAL GROWTH VOTE IS A REDISTRIBUTION IN THE MIX OF OPERATIONS IN THE SYSTEM. IN 1983, GENERAL AVIATION ACCOUNTED FOR 66 PERCENT OF TOTAL TOWER OPERATIONS. BY 1995, GENERAL AVIATION'S SHARE WILL GROW TO 75 PERCENT. DURING THIS SAME TIME PERIOD, AIR CARRIER PARTICIPATION WILL DECLINE FROM 18 TO 12 PERCENT WHILE COMMUTER SHARE WILL REMAIN CONSTANT AT 11 PERCENT. THIS SHIFT HAS ITS IMPLICATION FOR THE OPERATION OF THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SYSTEM. THE MORE HETEROGENEOUS THE MIX OF TRAFFIC, THE GREATER THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH LOCAL FLOW CONTROL MANAGEMENT.

FAA Chart

DISTRIBUTION OF IFR TRAFFIC HANDLED BY FAA AIR ROUTE TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTERS



ONCE AGAIN, THESE DIFFERENTIAL GROWTH RATES WILL RESULT IN A REDISTRIBUTION OF THE RELATIVE SHARE OF THE WORKLOAD. BY 1995, HALF OF THE CENTER WORKLOAD WILL BE COMPRISED OF COMMUTER AND GENERAL AVIATION AIRCRAFT, UP FROM ONLY 40 PERCENT IN 1983. DURING THIS SAME TIME PERIOD, AIR CARRIER AIRCRAFT HANDLED WILL DECLINE FROM 46 PERCENT OF CENTER WORKLOAD TO 39 PERCENT; MILITARY FROM 14 PERCENT TO 11 PERCENT.

FAA Chart